



Editorial

Attain all-sided revolutionary advances

We must take advantage of the exceedingly favorable revolutionary situation provided by the raging anti-Arroyo movement. Millions of people here and abroad are being awakened by the protest movement demanding the ouster of the most hated US-Arroyo regime.

We must persevere in advancing anti-Arroyo struggles in order to reap the fruits of the revolutionary movement's all-sided advance, achieve revolutionary leaps and attain long-term benefits for the people.

The struggle to oust the Arroyo regime presents to the people the need for fundamental change. The ruling regime's reeking corruption reveals the stench of the reactionary state. The state's repression of the people not only exposes Gloria Arroyo's adamant refusal to relinquish power, but also the fascism of the antipeople state. As the struggle continues and intensifies, more and more people become acutely aware of the need to put an end to the whole exploitative and oppressive system that has spawned despicable regimes like the US-Arroyo regime.



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The situation underscores the need for revolutionary violence to counter the fascist and counter-revolutionary violence of the reactionary state and puppet regime. The storm of protests serves as the fulcrum from which the revolutionary movement raises the level of consciousness, organization and mobilization of various sectors of the populace on society and revolution.

Revolutionary propaganda, organizing work and mobilization must reach the people wherever possible. We must bring to light their issues and advance their struggles against the ruling regime's heinous crimes.

Aside from drawing them out to join open protest actions in the streets, we must persevere in organizing the people and elevating their level of politics, organization and resistance in order to encourage them to participate in armed revolution and advance people's war.

Along with establishing broad tactical organizations and various forms and levels of the anti-Arroyo united front, there is urgent need to hasten the expansion

and consolidation of the organized and solid core of the revolution—the Party, the people's army, the mass organizations and the organs of political power.

We must ensure that a significant number among the millions of mobilized people are recruited to the Party and the New People's Army, especially from the toiling masses and the educated youth. They will serve as cadre in arousing, organizing and mobilizing the greater majority.

We must intensify tactical offensives simultaneous with the growing anti-Arroyo protests. These offensives will provide urgent relief to a people tyrranized by a brutal regime. They are also expected to yield more weapons for the NPA and consolidate their ranks and advance people's war into a new and higher level.

Victorious tactical offensives will give great inspiration and vibrancy to the entire revolutionary movement and to the people waging resistance. They will further shake the already floundering regime and contribute greatly in hastening its downfall. **AB**

NPA armed actions in March

The New People's Army (NPA) seized more than seven weapons in a raid on a mining company in Compostela Valley on March 6. Two government troopers were also killed and seven others wounded in three separate NPA offensives in Misamis Occidental, Camarines Sur and Quezon this month.

In Compostela Valley, five M16 Armalite rifles, two shotguns, two short firearms, communications equipment and computers were seized by NPA guerrillas in a raid on the Apex Mining Corporation in Barangay Masara, Maco. The Red fighters also destroyed the mining company's equipment.

In a statement, Rigoberto Sanchez, spokesperson of the NPA Merardo Arce Command of the Southern Mindanao Region said that the raid was punishment for the plunder and environmental destruction brought about by the operations of the mining company. He added that the destruction and confiscation of the company's equipment is a telling message that the revolutionary movement stands stern in its position against plunder by big foreign mining companies operating in the country.

In Misamis Occidental, a military officer and four government soldiers were wounded in a clash between Red guerrillas and elements of the "C" Coy of the 10th IB in Barangay Carmen, Jimenez on March 18. The government troopers were conducting military operations when the Red fighters ambushed them. The wounded officer was identified as 1Lt. John Rodolf Gonzaga.

In Camarines Sur, two soldiers of the Philippine Army were killed on the spot when the NPA launched an attack in Cawayan, Ragay on



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March 11. The two government soldiers, who were aboard a motorcycle were on their way back to the detachment in nearby Barangay Casay, Lupi when the Red guerrillas assaulted them.

In Quezon, two enemy soldiers were wounded in an ambush launched by the NPA against a platoon of the Philippine Army operating in San Pablo (Suha), Catanauan on March 18.

Meanwhile, amid a number of recent and successive tactical offensives by the NPA, AFP Chief Gen. Hermogenes Esperon admitted that the military cannot crush all 17 NPA guerrilla fronts by the first quarter of 2008. It will be recalled that the rationale for Esperon's term extension was to maintain the momentum of the government's campaign against the NPA. He was due to retire last February. AB

Further intensify militant struggles

The Filipino people's struggle against the US-Arroyo regime continues to gather strength with the broad anti-Arroyo alliance reaching new and higher levels of unity. Workers, peasants, the semiproletariat, government employees, youth and students, women, church people, lawyers, former government officials, politicians, businessmen and known personalities are all vigorously taking action.

Through successive mass actions in the streets, in schools, communities and other venues, they manifest their protest and intense desire to put an end to the rule of the corrupt and brutal Arroyo regime.

Gloria Arroyo clings to power as tenaciously as ever in the face of the people's broad unity and urgent demand for her resignation or ouster. She has utilized the entire state arsenal to concoct dirty maneuvers and inflict violence against those who struggle against her regime.

Before victory is achieved, the struggle to oust the utterly hated US-Arroyo regime is sure to encounter many twists and turns. It is thus crucial to strengthen militant and progressive factors in advancing the mass movement and the broad united front. This is the key that would enable the people to gain more strength, perseverance, courage and fortitude to create a storm of protests that would lead to Arroyo's ouster from power.

We must hasten the process of strengthening the basic alliance of workers and peasants nationwide and its solidarity with the urban petty bourgeoisie and other progressive sectors. This will in turn

strengthen and consolidate the broad anti-Arroyo united front composed likewise of personalities from the upper strata of the bourgeoisie and part of the ruling class. It is the deep and solid unity of the toiling masses and the lower

strata of the petty bourgeoisie within the broad united front that will prevent in a major way the weaknesses, divisiveness and vacillations of elements coming from the upper classes. It is the basic and positive alliance and the militant forces within that serve as the reliable, solid core of the mass movement and the anti-Arroyo united front.

The ability of the anti-Arroyo movement to be daring and perse-



vering in struggle and to ensure its victory hinges on these forces. It is they who are most interested and determined to put an end to the current corrupt and repressive rule because it is they who bear the brunt of the ruling regime and social system's corruption, subjugation and oppression. They wage determined and all-out struggle not only against the ruling regime, but against imperialism, feudalism, bureaucrat capitalism and fascism and for radical, meaningful and continuing basic social change.

It is therefore the duty of the militant and progressive sections of the anti-Arroyo movement to massively arouse, organize and mobilize the workers, peasants, rank-and-file employees, urban poor, unemployed, national minorities, families of migrant workers and others from the most exploited and oppressed sectors of Philippine society.

The youth and students have a special role in invigorating and propagating nationwide the new propaganda movement not only against the US-Arroyo regime but against the system that it rules over and maintains. Students and youth must intensify their struggles by strengthening their unity with the basic sectors. Students will be able to enhance severalfold

their effectiveness as a force in the anti-Arroyo struggle if they are able to arouse the people in the communities, factories and offices around their schools as well as other areas they could reach. They must even troop to the countryside and other areas of the country to hasten organizing and mobilizing work among the broad masses of the people.

The basic and progressive sectors must closely link their day-to-day struggles with the struggle against the Arroyo regime's corruption. Cries of protest against worsening poverty, hunger, unemployment, injustice and repression must reverberate across the land.

Militant actions by the basic and progressive sectors will further strengthen the storm of protests and struggles of the Filipino people. Their militancy, perseverance and determination in the struggle will serve as an effective weapon in fighting and thwarting all of the regime's schemes to stay in power. The anti-Arroyo struggle serves to advance the overall struggle to achieve revolutionary leaps that will lead to the demise of the corrupt and moribund ruling system and the attainment of continuing progressive social change.

AB

Anti-Arroyo protests rage on

The raging protests demanding the ouster of Gloria Arroyo are intensifying as well as the demand to make her accountable for all her crimes.

On March 14, various youth and student groups led by Youth Act

Now launched a concert-rally at the Liwasang Bonifacio. The estimated number of participants was pegged at 10,000, which included students from different schools, uni-

versi-

ties and high schools. They were joined by church prelates like Bishops Teodoro Bacani and Oscar Cruz, leaders of the Ecumenical Bishop's Forum and other church leaders. Also in attendance were representatives of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines, Makati Business Club, Philippine Airlines Employees Association, August 21 Movement, La Liga Policy Institute, former Vice President Teofisto Guingona, Rep. Satur Ocampo and Liza Maza, Manila Mayor Alfredo Lim and Joey de Venecia III, among other personalities.

Lambasting Gloria Arroyo's recent "unity walk" gimmick that paraded students around Malacañang, Youth Act Now said that the true voice of the youth is in Liwasang Bonifacio and not at the Palace.

That same day, various activities against Arroyo were also launched by progressive organizations. The Kalipunan ng Damayang Mahihirap or Kadamay, an urban



poor association, held a mass and launched a "people's calvary" in Tondo, Manila. Farmers led by the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas marched from the Welcome Rotunda to Morayta. They were joined by peasants from the Southern Tagalog region and members of the Kilusang Mayo Uno. The human rights group Karapatan also staged a protest before the office of the Commission on Human Rights to condemn continuing military abuses and human rights violations.

Before this, on March 13, up to 80 former cabinet members from

the Aquino, Ramos, Estrada and Arroyo administrations issued a statement placing Arroyo at the center of corruption and coverups of the anomalies surrounding the scuttled NBN-ZTE project. On the other hand, hundreds of members of Piston (Pagkakaisa ng mga Samahan ng mga Tsuper at Operator Nationwide) together with other progressive organizations trooped to the Senate on March 11 during the ongoing hearing on the scandal-ridden NBN-ZTE deal. This was after they spearheaded a Metro Manila-wide transport strike. Piston

believes that drivers should also involve themselves in assailing corruption issues against the government and join calls for its ouster.

Fisherfolk groups led by Pama-lakaya (Pagkakaisa ng Mamamayan at Lakas ng Mamamalakaya) staged a protest action in Manila Bay. They submerged themselves in water carrying placards demanding an investigation of corruption allegations involving the Joint Marine Seismic Undertaking (JMSU) in the Spratly Islands. Pursuant to the JMSU, the Arroyo regime allows China to conduct oil exploration in Philippine territories in the Spratlys in exchange for billions of dollars worth of loans.

On March 8, International Working Women's Day, around 5,000 members of the women's group Babala or Babae Laban sa Katiwalian and the militant GABRI-ELA took to the streets and marched from the Welcome Rotunda to Mendiola in Manila. They were joined by known personalities such as former Sen. Leticia Ramos-Shahani, movie actresses and producers Bibeth Orteza and Armida Siguion-Reyna, Gina de Venecia, Sandra Cam, Josie Lichauco and wives of detained Magdalo soldiers, among others.

Meanwhile, some 30 youth protesters staged a lightning rally in Baguio City on March 18 while Gloria Arroyo was at the Mansion House having dinner with Philippine Military Academy graduates. The rallyists shouted "Gloria resign," prompting the arrest of five of the protesters by the police. Arrested were UP-Baguio Student Council chair John Saligbon; Anakbayan deputy secretary John Dalangin; LFS member Keidy Transfiguracion; Anakbayan member Eddie Mancilla; and Cordillera Human Rights Alliance vice chair Imelda Tabiando. They were later released by the police. AB

Malacañang buys out new Senate witness

The Arroyo regime once again mobilized its agents to keep the stench of the anomalous NBN-ZTE contract from reeking out. In the latest Senate hearing on March 11, new witness Leo San Miguel, a former ZTE consultant, refused to disclose what he knew about the more than \$41 million in kickbacks and commissions that went to the pockets of couple Gloria and Mike Arroyo and their cohorts.

San Miguel contradicted the previous testimony of his former employee Engr. Dante Madriaga linking the Arroyo couple and former COMELEC Chair Benjamin Abalos to the anomalous deal. Madriaga earlier said that the Abalos group composed of San Miguel, Ruben Reyes and Quirino dela Torre earned tremendously from the deal, and served as conduits of bigger kickbacks as well.

Sen. Panfilo Lacson revealed that he met with San Miguel four times before the latter finally agreed to face the Senate as a witness. San Miguel promised Lacson that he would divulge everything he knows about the anomalies in the NBN-ZTE contract. His consistent denials at the Senate on the multimillion-dollar kickbacks that went to the Arroyo couple caught Lacson by surprise.

Meanwhile, lawyer Marcelino Agana IV of the Presidential Legislative Liaison Office admitted talking with San Miguel during Senate hearing breaks. He also confessed to calling San Miguel on the phone before the latter testified at the Senate.

It was Malacañang that called San Miguel on the phone to convince him to deny what he knew about the botched deal. Arroyo used Secretary for Special Concerns Remedios "Medy" Poblador to put a gag on San Miguel. Poblador is one of Arroyo's more notorious operators in implementing her dirty maneuvers. It will be recalled that it was the same Poblador who was involved in the controversial "Hello Garci" scandal and in giving out Malacañang bribe money to Catholic bishops last year. AB

Desperate regime's dirty maneuvers

Gloria Arroyo has been continuously attempting to deceive the people and employ dirty tactics in her determined effort to cover up the anomalies surrounding the NBN-ZTE project and other corruption issues involving her that are further being unraveled in her desperate moves to remain in power.

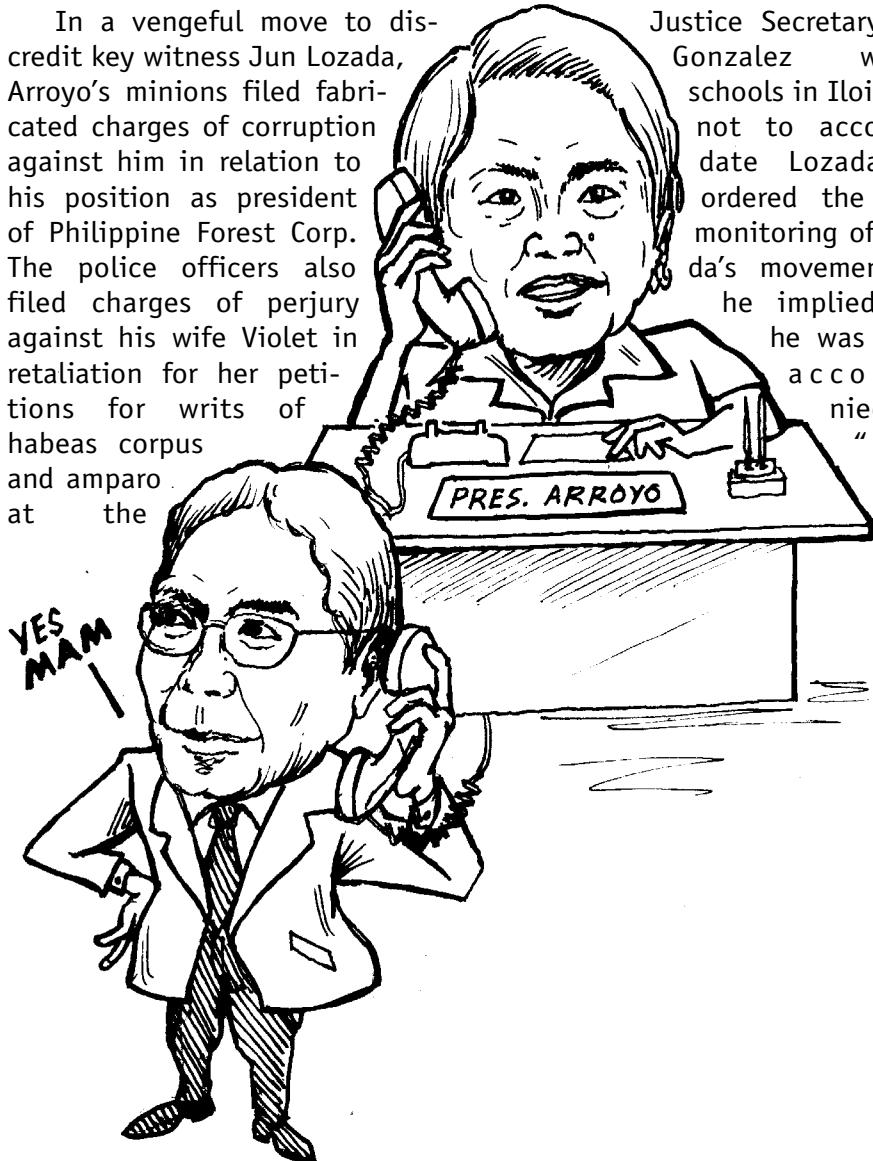
The Arroyo regime had reportedly spent almost ₱5 million for political advertisements in three major newspapers in only three weeks. This figure excludes expenses incurred for paid rallies, a series of staged "unity walks" involving an array of governors, cabinet members, police and military personnel, and bribery and buyouts of witnesses, among many others.

In a vengeful move to discredit key witness Jun Lozada, Arroyo's minions filed fabricated charges of corruption against him in relation to his position as president of Philippine Forest Corp. The police officers also filed charges of perjury against his wife Violet in retaliation for her petitions for writs of habeas corpus and amparo at the

Court of Appeals. Meanwhile, the Arroyo regime tried to sabotage Lozada's "caravan for truth" in Cebu City on March 17. After a secret meeting between Cardinal Ricardo Vidal and a number of Malacañang officials, the former ordered Cebu priests to distance themselves from Lozada. Some courageous priests, however, secretly held mass for him instead.

Prior to this incident, Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez warned schools in Iloilo City not to accommodate Lozada. He ordered the strict monitoring of Lozada's movements as he implied that he was to be accompanied by

"com-



munists" in his rounds of Iloilo. In spite of this, Lozada was warmly welcomed by students in Iloilo and Bacolod, making his recent regional visits a success.

In Laguna, the UP-Los Baños administration failed in its attempt to block the use of university facilities for a forum sponsored by the academic community for Lozada.

While the police force continued to disallow passage of anti-Arroyo demonstrators coming from the provinces, Malacañang went on a spending spree to fund pro-Arroyo demonstrations. This included a "visita iglesia" by a small women's group in 14 churches in Metro Manila. On March 14, the paid group People's Congress staged its own rally to coincide with the big interfaith rally at the Liwasang Bonifacio but was only able to mobilize a measly 100 people at the Welcome Rotunda.

Meanwhile, Arroyo succeeded in booting out former House Speaker Jose de Venecia from his presidency of the Lakas-Christian-Muslim Democrats after de Venecia lost the speakership to Rep. Prospero Nograles. Arroyo also endorsed plans to merge Lakas-CMD and her own party, Kabalikat ng Mamamayang Pilipino (Kampi). The proposed merger, should it push through, will also secure for Arroyo the majority of seats in Congress. She expects the merger to produce a powerful party that would dominate Philippine politics in the 2010 elections.

The proposed merger of the country's two dominant political parties will ensure that Gloria stays in power beyond 2010 and remains protected from being put on trial and punished for her grave crimes of plunder, graft and corruption. **AB**

JMSU: Treason and corruption

Irregularities surrounding the Arroyo regime's secret signing of the Joint Marine Seismic Undertaking (JMSU) were exposed in March. The JMSU is a tripartite agreement involving the Philippines, China and Vietnam that allows exploration of Philippine territorial seas near Palawan and the disputed Spratly Islands.

The JMSU was first signed between the Philippines and China in September 2004. After Vietnam sought to become a party to the accord, this resulted in a revised agreement signed in March 2005. The agreement for the most part calls for the exploration of Philippine territorial waters reputed to be rich in oil deposits.

Various groups from different sectors strongly oppose the JMSU and condemn the Arroyo regime's

treasonous behavior for allowing other countries to encroach on Philippine territory and exploit the country's resources. In signing the JMSU, the Arroyo regime has violated its own constitution which explicitly states that only Filipino-owned and -controlled companies could explore the Philippines' natural resources.

The Filipino people seethe in anger over the JMSU because it was signed in exchange for a \$2-billion loan package available annually until 2010. Most of the projects funded by China, including the infamous National Broadband Network, are riddled with anomalies including rampant bribe-giving to high-ranking government officials. Gloria Arroyo will go down in Philippine history not only as the biggest plunderer of the nation's coffers but also the biggest traitor to the national interest. AB

US rides on anti-Arroyo controversies to push its vested interests

The imperialist United States is exploiting issues of corruption involving the incumbent puppet Arroyo regime and huge Chinese-funded contracts in the Philippines in order to push its own economic interests and maintain its dominance over the country.

In an article entitled "Off the Rails in the Philippines" released by Heritage Foundation,

the US warns that the Bush administration's support to the Arroyo regime is contingent on the immediate termination if not reduction of the latter's favorable treatment of China.

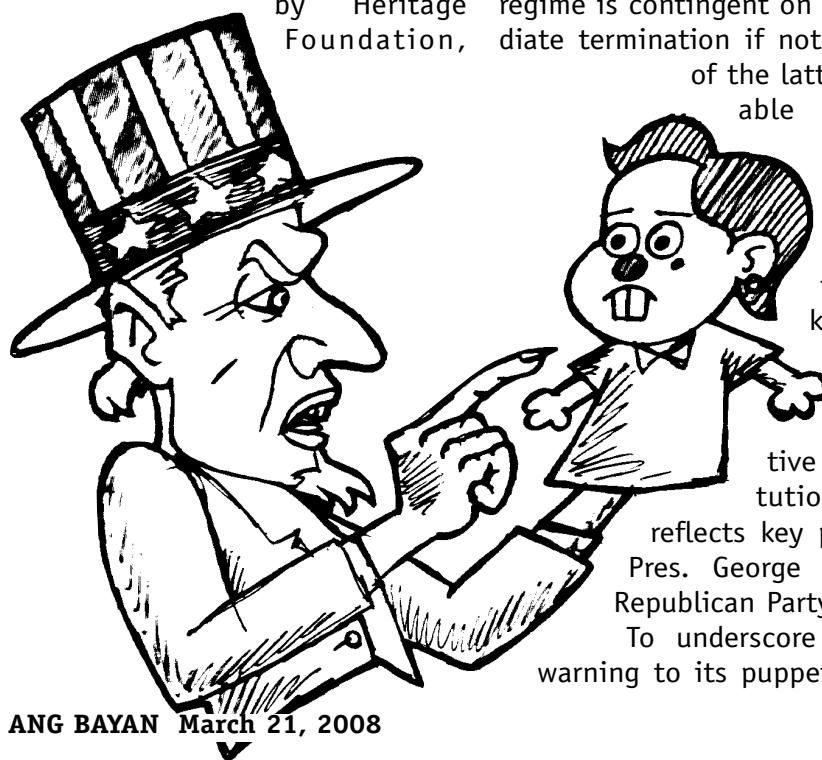
The Heritage Foundation is known to be a conservative US institution that reflects key policies of Pres. George W. Bush's Republican Party.

To underscore its stern warning to its puppet adminis-

tration, the institution cited the huge corruption cases that surround contracts signed by the Philippines and China and took special notice of major cases directly involving the Arroyo family.

This indirect warning by the imperialist US stems from its concern over the alarmingly growing role of China in the country. Heritage disclosed mounting US complaints over the increasing number of contracts favoring Chinese instead of American companies. The US was particularly piqued at the JMSU. The immense advantage that China stands to gain from the JMSU will undermine US interests in the Asia-Pacific, according to Heritage.

While the US has been issuing veiled threats at the incumbent puppet regime, this does not necessarily translate to support for escalating protests to topple the Arroyo regime. The US expects its puppet to heed its warning regarding its relations with China. The US is apprehensive that Arroyo's ouster through active people's protests will worsen the political crisis of the ruling system and likely affect long-term American interests in the country. AB





AFP nabs pastor, abducts 2 imams

There is no truth to the Arroyo regime's claims that incidents of human rights violations are on the decline. An attempt was made on the life of a mass leader in Iloilo City, a pastor was illegally arrested in Occidental Mindoro, a former union leader was murdered in cold blood in Cavite, and two imams were abducted in Aklan, all in the first three weeks of March.

March 18. Two motorcycle-riding men made an attempt on the life of Aurelio Bosque, spokesperson of Bagong Alyansang Makabayan-Panay. Bosque and his companion were tailed by the would-be assassins from his office in Jaro District, Iloilo City and persistently followed even after they transferred from the jeepney they were boarding to a taxi. In one instance, the two men attempted to overtake the taxi they were riding. The assassins stopped trailing them only after Bosque and his companion went directly to a police detachment in Barangay Montinola and sought the help of the barangay captain.

March 16. Elements of the Philippine National Police illegally arrested Rev. Melchor Abesamis, a United Methodist Church pastor, in the town of Mamburao, Occidental Mindoro. The police suspect him to be a member of the New People's Army and have implicated him in the death of four policemen in an ambush on May 10, 2007.

March 10. Gunmen killed Gerardo "Gerry" Cristobal, former president of the Samahan ng mga Manggagawa sa EMI-Yazaki-Independent (SAMAHAN). Cristobal was ambushed while on his way home to Malagasang II, Cavite, at around 8 a.m. by armed men aboard a Mitsubishi Pajero. He was killed instantly after sustaining seven gunshot wounds. He had survived an earlier attempt on his life on April 28, 2006 when motorcycle-riding men

in ski masks ambushed him at Anabu Public Market where he sustained nine gunshot wounds in his body. One of the would-be assassins was identified as SP01 Romeo Lara, an operative of the Philippine National Police-Intelligence Division in Imus, Cavite.

Cristobal's foiled assassination was followed by an ambush on four more union officials of SAMAHAN in front of EMI-Yazaki at 5:20 a.m. on December 11, 2006. Former union board member Jesus "Buth" Servida was killed on the spot while Joel Sale was seriously wounded. The

two other unionists escaped unscathed.

Cristobal is the second slay victim from EMI-Yazaki since 2006.

March 8. Seven agents of the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (ISAFP) abducted Muhammad Bani and Al-Midzbar Bunajal, both imams, while they were on their way to a Madrasah (Islamic religious school) in Sitio Ambulong, Barangay Manoc-Manoc, Boracay Island. Witnesses to the incident said that the military agents fired their guns twice before the two victims were forcibly taken inside a Suzuki All-Purpose Vehicle. The Bani family has already filed a complaint before the Commission on Human Rights. The military claimed that the imams were Abu Sayyaf elements. AB

New set of trumped-up charges filed against JMS

Two more trumped-up charges against NDFP chief political consultant Jose Maria Sison were filed by the Armed Forces of the Philippines. The PNP Task Force Usig said that murder charges will be filed against Sison for the alleged killing of Joey Javier, two years after the murder took place. The assassination of Javier, leader of Caguiongan, a sister organization of the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas took place near the 17th IB detachment in Baggao, Cagayan in November 2006.

This same month, the AFP also included Sison among the 38 people accused in the abduction of Elizabeth Gutierrez on October 24, 2007 in Basey, Samar. Among his co-accused are Comrade Luis Jalandoni of the NDFP; Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal, Communist Party of the Philippines spokesperson; Rep. Satur Ocampo of Bayan Muna; and Randall Echanis, deputy secretary general of the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas.

The NDFP-Eastern Visayas has issued a statement identifying Gutierrez as a military intelligence asset involved in the abduction, torture and murder of a number of civilians in Barangay Cancaiyas, Basey. She was sentenced to death by the revolutionary people's court in October 2007.

AB

The long wait is over

Unlike most comrades who decide to join the New People's Army, it took Ka Amanda almost 10 years of waiting before she became a Red fighter. It was one blissful day in 2006 that a leading cadre in her collective announced that she prepare herself for her new disposition in the countryside.

Overjoyed, Ka Amanda wrote a poem that she aptly entitled "Waiting to be a Red fighter." (Her poem is one among the creative works from Panay that saw print in the October 2006 issue of *Ulos*, the cultural journal of the national democratic movement).

It was not difficult for Ka Amanda to grasp the importance of armed revolution. She was one of the student writers who actively campaigned for campus press freedom and academic freedom while she was still in college. While attending writing workshops, educational fora, group discussions and conferences on social issues, she was able to view campus issues within the framework of semifeastal and semicolonial Philippine society.

It wasn't long before she joined the Kabataang Makabayan. She was eventually recruited to the Communist Party of the Philippines. By joining the underground movement, Ka Amanda's political awareness deepened and broadened, and her perspectives in life took shape. In 1996, she joined a group of students who integrated with the masses in a guerrilla front. She was assigned to an armed propaganda unit in southwestern Panay where she participated in mass work.

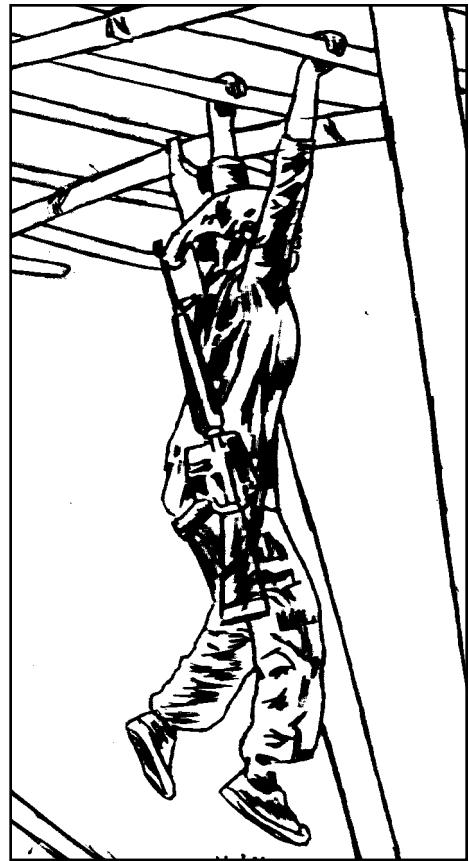
It was there that she had first-hand experience living among Red fighters coming from various social classes. She felt the comradely spirit and care of the Red guerrillas who like her were also of petty-bourgeois origin. At first, the comrades helped her in their treks, especially at night when using

torches or flashlights was forbidden, in crossing slippery rocks in rivers and streams, in climbing steep mountains and traversing slippery trails. She strove hard to quickly adapt to the terrain alongside the comrades and even pushed herself beyond her physical limits. She knew too well that every small move was very important to the Red fighters, especially in recovery areas that were under attack by fascist military troopers and the paramilitary bandit Revolutionary Proletarian Army (RPA).

Her integration deeply affected her work in the countryside and in the people's army. The political writings she had read, which used to be all on the level of theory, suddenly sprang to life. She experienced firsthand how deeply the toiling masses supported and cared for their army. It was in complete contrast to the black propaganda being spread by enemy soldiers in their effort to tarnish the prestige of the revolutionary movement and conceal their heinous crimes against the people.

In the countryside, the people's army lives among the peasants whose life's desire was so simple—to have a parcel of land to till. The Red fighters participated in production, and eating cassava with poor farmers was among the simple day-to-day pleasures that they shared.

Ka Amanda was witness to the radically advanced relationship between Red guerrillas and the masses. She saw the dynamic exchange of principled, honest and comradely criticism and self-criti-



cism between the villagers and the people's army. In a particular incident that would make a lasting impression on her, she saw how an old farmer pointed out the weaknesses of an NPA squad leader and how these constructive criticisms were calmly, humbly and gratefully accepted by the comrade.

Although her integration only lasted a few weeks, it was an experience that was etched deeply into her consciousness. She put into writing all her impressions and the lessons she learned and published them in her campus journal. Soon after, she presented to her collective her desire to become a Red fighter. Her decision was further strengthened after she learned that Mary Gene Dumaplin (Ka Tingting), a poet and former student of the University of the Philippines-Visayas was killed in an encounter with the 12th IB in 1998.

She once again put forward her decision to join the people's army when Party regional cadres

launched a campaign to encourage youth and students to take up arms and devote their youth and talents to the New People's Army. A number of student and youth activists responded positively to this campaign. But her collective could not as yet grant permission for her deployment because she was still urgently needed to fulfill her tasks for an urban-based unit.

After learning that she could not leave her urban posting just yet, Ka Amanda consoled herself by composing a poem:

Gusto ko na sanang sumuko/Naiinip na kasi sa mga pag-asa mo/Ngunit talagang desidido na ako sa 'yo/Handang harapin mga pahirap at pagsubok// (I had come close to giving up/I grow impatient for your promise to come true/But I am quite decided on you/And am ready to face the sacrifices and trials//)

Ka Amanda's determination never wavered. She enthusiastically accomplished her tasks while waiting. One fine day in June 2006, her long wait was finally over. Her collective decided to grant her longtime request.

When she joined the people's army, she was assigned to an all-male platoon. This prompted her to write several letters encouraging her fellow women students to join the NPA and be part of the rich crop of women who struggled and triumphed.

Ka Amanda now belongs to the growing number of women fighters in the NPA. She pledged that: *Sa araw ng lubos na pagtanggap mo sa akin/Sisiguraduhin kong hindi masasayang/Ang tagal ng aking paghihintay/Maglilingkod sa iyo nang buong panahon at buhay// (On the day you take me to your bosom completely/Be assured that my long wait would not have been in vain/All my time, all my life will be devoted to serving you).* AB

Arroyo's destructive "priority projects" spawn massive demolitions

Gloria Arroyo's much-hyped "priority projects" involve massive demolitions of houses of impoverished residents not only in Metro Manila but in several provinces nationwide.

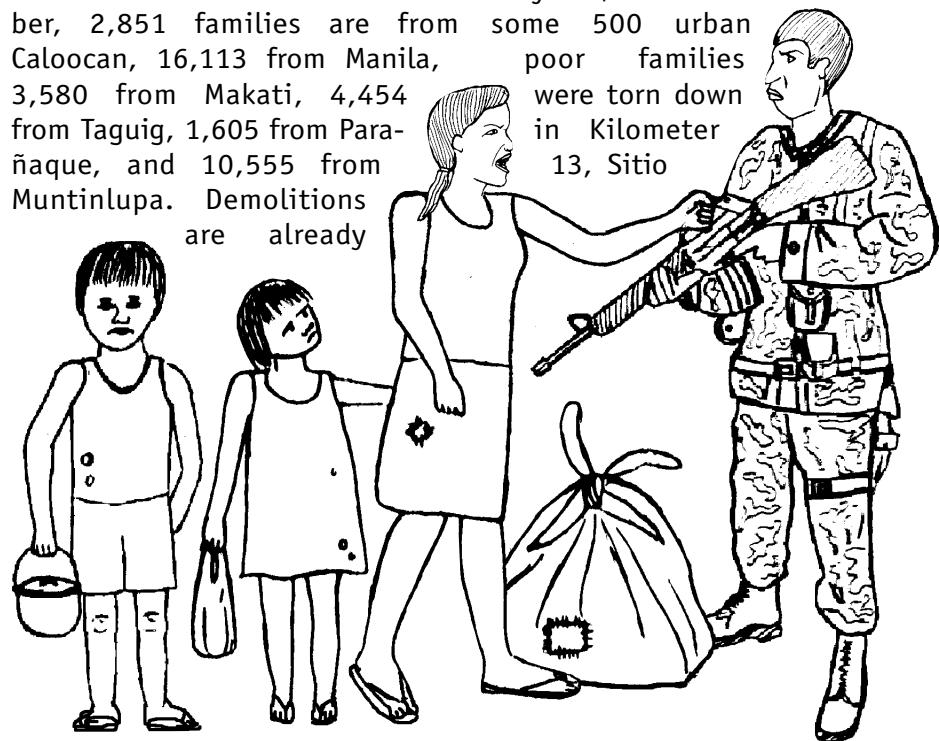
Arroyo's assurance that it is the poor who will benefit most from the infrastructure projects are pure lies. These "development" projects not only cause the destruction of homes but obliterate the livelihoods of thousands of families. Only big compradors and foreign investors benefit from the projects. More so, these destructive projects serve as milch cows of the Arroyo camp that engages in corruption and plunder with impunity.

An estimated 80,000 families or 400,000 people are expected to lose their homes due to massive evictions in connection with the North-South Railway Project. The project will affect close to 39,000 families living along Metro Manila's railroad tracks. Of this number, 2,851 families are from Caloocan, 16,113 from Manila, 3,580 from Makati, 4,454 from Taguig, 1,605 from Paranaque, and 10,555 from Muntinlupa. Demolitions are already

halfway through in these areas. There are 21 affected barangays in Caloocan, 88 in Manila, four in Makati, two in Taguig, one in Paranaque and eight in Muntinlupa. The demolitions have been completed along the railroad tracks in southern Metro Manila. Houses lined along the railways in Vito Cruz through Sta. Mesa have already been dismantled.

Thousands of families are likewise affected in Arroyo's road-widening projects. Demolitions along C-5 Road alone have led to the eviction of almost 40,000 families in Barangays Pansol, Culiad, Pasong Tamo, Holy Spirit and Tandang Sora in Quezon City.

Demolitions are widespread along C-5 Road in Taguig. On January 29, houses of some 500 urban poor families were torn down in Kilometer 13, Sitio



Masagana, East Service Road, Western Bicutan.

The military were active instruments in these demolitions. In full combat gear, soldiers from the Philippine Army razed houses to the ground while an AFP helicopter hovered over the area. About a battalion of soldiers flooded the area on January 28, citing so-called NPA presence as a pretext.

Demolitions also took place in R-10 Mabuhay in Tondo, Manila as part of a road-widening project in the area. On the other hand, 12,000 families in Sta. Ana, Manila were affected by the Laguna Lake Rehabilitation Program.

The Manila North Harbor privatization project, which entails the construction of a medium-rise building on a 5.6-hectare lot, will drive away 10,000 families.

Even sidestreet vendors working near public markets and roads have not been spared. On March 5, the MMDA brutally demolished vendors' stalls at the Philcoa Wet and Dry Market in Commonwealth Avenue, Quezon City.

On January 8, the Zero Vendors Policy sponsored by the mayor of Manila began full implementation. The city ordinance prohibits vending along the sidewalks of Rizal Avenue, Pedro Gil and Vito Cruz.

In Southern Tagalog, almost 14 towns and seven cities are affected by the Philippine National Railroad Modernization and Rehabilitation Project. The immediate targets of demolition in Laguna are houses along the railroad tracks in San Pablo, Sta. Rosa, Biñan, Calamba and San Pedro, which will affect 10,454 families. Only 1,600 families have been brought to relocation sites, with the rest left to fend for themselves. The National Housing Authority led the demolition, with help from the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council led by Vice

Pres. Noli de Castro. Officials have raked in an estimated ₱1 billion worth of kickbacks from funds allotted for relocation, which would have provided ₱150,000 in damage fees to every affected family.

Twelve of the 20 road-widening projects are likewise situated in this region. As a result, thousands of houses have already been demolished in Laguna.

Meanwhile, the mayors of Cavite City, Dasmariñas and Bacoor, Cavite have started implementing the "zero squatters" policy that

will affect 57,000 families.

In Nueva Vizcaya, a number of houses were torn down as a result of the mining operations of Oxiana Mining Corp. More families will also be evicted in Cagayan with the construction of the Cagayan Eco Zone and an airport in the town of Sta. Ana.

In Davao, demolitions took place in line with the privatization of the Davao Medical Center. Meanwhile, houses of ordinary soldiers were also dismantled around the Camp Panakan area where a private condominium is set to be built. **AB**

The ugly face of relocation

SOUTHVILLE Subdivision Phase I in Barangay Marinig, Cabuyao, Laguna is a testament to the empty promises and inhumanity of the Arroyo regime's relocation program. Urban poor families whose homes and handful of personal belongings have been demolished are exiled to dreadful relocation sites very far from their places of work.

A total of 9,783 evicted families or about 30,000 individuals living beside the Philippine National Railways (PNR) tracks in Makati and Manila have been dumped in Southville 1. Their homes were torn down by virtue of Administrative Order 111 signed by Arroyo on November 8, 2004. The series of demolitions is part of the preparations for the PNR "rehabilitation program" that counts among the regime's priority projects.

The victims were given a measly ₱25,000 per household by the National Housing Authority and were promised an additional ₱25,000 for materials needed in the construction of new houses in exchange for their voluntary relocation to Southville 1. Each family was provided a 40-square meter lot. The evictees, however, were required to purchase their construction materials only from "authorized" suppliers whose prices were double those of regular outlets. As a result, the families are able to build only shanties.

Despite being unemployed, the victims are made to cough up a monthly amortization of ₱200-₱500 for their lots for the next 30 years. Should they default on their payments for a number of months, they become victims of eviction twice over.

Sixty-six percent of the shanties in Southville 1 have no electricity or water, as the families obviously could not afford the mandatory connection fee of ₱5,000. A number of dwellers have already contracted diseases from drinking water from a deep well believed to be contaminated by a nearby dumpsite. Diseases such as tuberculosis and dengue fever are commonplace. Unfortunately, there is only one health center in the area, with only two nurses and a part-time midwife on duty. The health center is closed on Saturdays and Sundays. **AB**